Sex Differences in Gender Role Attitudes

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Jamie Michelle Lewis

The Ohio State University
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Project Advisor: Professor Sharon Sassler, Ph.D., Department of Sociology

Abstract

Past sociological research has found that women have made the transition from traditional gender roles to more non-traditional and egalitarian patterns more quickly than have men. This study argued that such discrepant behavior results from the incongruent gender role attitudes of men and women. In particular, it was hypothesized that women would respond to measures of gender role attitudes in a way that is more congruent with egalitarian gender ideology, while men would reply in a way that corresponds to traditional views of gender. This prediction was tested using data from the 2002 Monitoring the Future (MTF) 12th-Grade Survey, thereby providing a window into the contemporary and emerging gender ideology of young women and men. Results yielded highly significant sex differences regarding all three gender role attitude measures. Men were found to be much more likely than women to support a traditional gendered division of labor, to believe maternal employment to have negative effects on young children, and to regard maternal employment as an impediment to close mother-child relationships. However, men's gender role beliefs were determined to be predominantly neutral—neither traditional nor egalitarian, rather than traditional. This suggests that greater levels of gender equality may arise as this young generation finds its place within social institutions.

Women and men's gender role attitudes directly affect many, if not all, of their life experiences. Attitudes concerning appropriate gender roles influence many aspects of marital and family relationships, employment processes, and interpersonal relationships (Ridgeway, 1997). The maintenance of traditional gender role beliefs aids the perpetuation of discrimination against women, and helps to conserve discrepant opportunities for women and men in education, employment, politics, and other arenas (Blee and Tickamyer, 1995; Ridgeway, 1997).

Much of the sociological literature notes that the transformation from more traditional gender role attitudes to more egalitarian attitudes has proceeded more quickly for women than for men (Thornton and Young-DeMarco, 2001; Ridgeway, 1997). This divergence is evident in the fact that while women have increasingly adopted the traditional male role by becoming involved in paid employment, men have not appropriated the traditional female role comprised of child care and housework to the same degree (Riley, 2003; Brines, 1994; Bernard, 1981; Gerson, 1993). Nonetheless, sex differences in the formation of gender role attitudes, as well as the differential distributions of traditional and egalitarian gender role ideology among women and men, have not been thoroughly analyzed. A substantial body of research has examined gender role beliefs in girls and women: how such attitudes are formed, how macrosocial structures affect and modify such attitudes, and how gender beliefs are conveyed from one generation of women to the next. The literature contains much less comparable information on men (Blee and Tickamyer, 1995).

The present study analyzes differences between men's and women's gender role attitudes, by examining data from female and male high school seniors. Past research has

focused almost exclusively on the gender role perspectives of adults with established marriages and families. There has been little consideration of the gender role attitudes of adolescents and teens. This study advances extant research by focusing on those just entering into adulthood, thereby providing a window into contemporary and emerging gender ideology. These young men and women will soon embark on their careers and form romantic and/or marital relationships and families. Their gender role attitudes and resulting decisions will decidedly shape each of these institutions—marriage, the family, and the workforce—in the near future (Thornton and Young-DeMarco, 2001). Specifically, gender role attitudes can shape family formation patterns, family goals, and the ways in which the balancing act of work and family is negotiated.

I first review conceptualizations of traditional and egalitarian gender role attitudes. Then, I explore theories explaining the reasons why men and women may hold different perspectives. I next formulate hypotheses about women and men's variant levels of support for egalitarian or traditional gender roles, and test these using data from the 2002 Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey.

Traditional Gender Roles

Those with traditional gender role attitudes believe that women and men should ideally fulfill complimentary and distinct roles. Thus, traditionally minded individuals consider the good provider role to be appropriate for men and the homemaker role to be proper for women (Riley, 2003; Bernard, 1981; Fraser and Gordon, 1994; Brines, 1994). Bernard (1981) describes the good provider as a man who furnishes food, clothing, and other necessities and luxuries for his family. Good providers are solely responsible for

the economic support of their families; their wives do not work. In this way, the good provider role is defined in terms of its direct opposition to and complementary relationship with the homemaker role. Providing men are required to demonstrate achievement and success in their employment, and their worth is measured in terms of wages and their relative position in the labor market. This culture of success is revealed in the use of the term breadwinning, which suggests that providers are involved in a competition for earnings. Dispensation of emotional expressivity to spouses and children is not required of male providers. Rather, their family responsibilities are fulfilled via their job responsibilities. A 'family man' is defined in terms of his ability to provide for the material needs of his family, rather than through the quality of his interpersonal relationships with family members or through the provision of kindness, loving support, or emotional involvement. In fact, a man's job responsibilities are primary and paramount over his familial duties.

Men continue to attach significance to the breadwinner role as the primary way of producing a masculine identity (Riley, 2003). Much of this attachment is due to the idealization of male employment, and the fact that paid employment is most often the only source of masculine identity available to men. Provision is greatly valued in our capitalistic society, as demonstrated in its strong association with achievement, success, and status.

Women's traditional role as the child-centered housewife, which was idealized in the 1950s, originated during the industrialization of the nineteenth century. Gerson (1985) predicates that the development of the factory system during this era resulted in the social, physical, and economic separation of the public and private spheres. As men

were drawn into the workplace, and the family wage grew in importance and incidence, women were relegated to the home. Due to the establishment of a mass system of compulsory education and the creation of laws prohibiting the exploitation of children's labor, childhood and adolescence were extended in length and made more leisurely. These developments augmented women's responsibilities as child rearers, and facilitated the creation of an idealized and mystical notion of "true motherhood." "True motherhood," which later transformed into the wider "cult of domesticity," avowed that women were naturally and exclusively endowed with the nurturing emotional capacities required to manage the private sphere and rear children properly, protecting them and society's moral fabric from the corrupting influence of industrialism. Thus, motherhood came to be regarded as every woman's primary responsibility and paramount achievement, and the home came to be viewed as women's "proper place."

The traditional female role, in which the woman performs housework and engages in childcare, is associated with low levels of prestige and negative values in comparison to the role of men (Riley, 2003; Bernard, 1981). Much of this results from homemakers' dependency upon breadwinners that occurs within capitalism (Fraser and Gordon, 1994; Brines, 1994). Because women in traditional roles are excluded from the job market, they can gain access to cash-mediated markets only through the money provided to them by men. Women's dependency is reinforced even as they become involved in paid work, due to their concentration in jobs associated with low levels of prestige and pay. The widespread participation of women in occupations emphasizing care work recreates much of their traditional role (Folbre, 2001). Furthermore, Hochscild (1997) suggests that

women's and men's concentration of time and resources in the public sphere and neglect of the private realm is evidence of the devaluation of work in the home.

Egalitarian Gender Roles

The adoption of egalitarian gender ideals involves new roles for both women and men. For women, new responsibilities involve greater participation in paid employment, and a greater share in providing the family's financial needs (Riley, 2003; Potuchek, 1992). A corresponding decrease in their obligatory engagement in childcare and housework should also be observed. For men, anticipated behavior includes increased household duties and acceptance of additional responsibility for child rearing. Other demands on men include greater expressiveness, nurturance, and intimacy (Bernard, 1981). Overall, an egalitarian pattern consists of a more equal distribution of labor market participation and household and childcare responsibilities (Brines, 1994; Gerson, 1993).

However, Potuchek (1992) asserts that the emergence of the dual-earner pattern within marriages does not necessarily correspond with a rise in egalitarian gender role attitudes. Many wives undertake employment—and many husbands allow their wives to become employed—due to financial needs rather than ideological impulses. Therefore, it is mandatory that sociologists separate the gendered behavior of men and women from their gender role attitudes, as they often are conflictual. Researchers should focus on whether individuals view breadwinning, housework, and childcare as activities that should be shared equally between wives and husbands. Other indicators of egalitarian gender role attitudes include the approval of married women's employment, the framing

of women's income as important to families, agreeing that working mothers can have quality relationships with their children, and refuting the assertion that men alone should make important family decisions.

Gerson (1993) suggests that an egalitarian viewpoint rejects the assertion that manhood is the opposite of womanhood—that masculine is equivalent to "not feminine." Instead, egalitarianism posits that the sexes are more similar than different. Not only are differences between the sexes more modest than traditional views suggest, they are also more malleable and largely undesired.

Sex Differences in Gender Role Attitudes

While role transformations should operate for both sexes, Gerson (1985) argues that the differential rewards and values attached to feminine and masculine traits encourage members of both sexes to adopt the more highly esteemed masculine attributes. Though women may be rewarded for demonstrating traditional feminine behavior, they are simultaneously commended for certain types of masculine properties. Women are therefore likely to incorporate a mixture of feminine and masculine traits. Men, however, receive encouragement for masculine behavior and are criticized for acting in a feminine manner. The ambiguity involved in the socialization of females often results in their development of egalitarian gender role attitudes, while the consistent messages conferred upon males cause them to adhere to and support the traditional male role.

Women's acceptance of egalitarian gender ideals has occurred largely as an attempt to mitigate their subordinate status vis-à-vis men. Theories of structural restraint,

which derive from conflict theory, emphasize the ways in which women's choices and behavior are constrained by social institutions constructed and administered by men. These structural constraints on women are created through patriarchy, as well as through the capitalist organization of labor. Patriarchy, as defined by Hartmann (1976:138), is the "set of social relations which has a material base and in which there are hierarchical relations between men, and solidarity among them, which enable them to control women. Patriarchy is thus the system of male oppression of women." The organization of labor contributes to the exploitation of women as unpaid workers by reinforcing women's dependency upon providing men. By viewing women as a reserve labor force expected to participate in the paid labor force according to the needs of male employers and workers, and by relegating women to occupational positions affording low levels of prestige, pay, and advancement opportunities, the market division of labor enables the exploitation of women as paid workers (Gerson, 1985).

Throughout history, and particularly during the last forty years, women have struggled against the legacy of patriarchy, and have endeavored to establish a more equitable organization of female and male labor. Due to the fact that positions of power and status were traditionally withheld from women and held by men, it has been necessary for women to prove themselves to be "like men" in order to acquire such positions. Therefore, it can be argued that the feminist movement occurred and continues through the masculinization of women, through which they incorporate and display masculine traits such as rationality, independence, competitiveness, and assertiveness. However, women have not sacrificed their traditional roles for male roles. Instead, they

have assimilated elements of the traditional male and female roles into an egalitarian gender role.

Women's and men's discrepant acceptance of egalitarianism is explained in part through the work of Chodorow (1989), who argues that feminine and masculine personalities result from women's mothering and the unconscious psychological processes that occur early in a child's development between the child and her/his mother. Girls are hypothesized to form continually close relationships with their mothers, and are thus in a position to learn how to be feminine and nurturing like their mothers. Through this mechanism, females adopt the desires and capacities to mother that they later enact upon and utilize in their families of procreation. In contrast, mothers develop more distant relationships with sons, and instead encourage boys to differentiate themselves and adopt a male role. Because fathers are predominantly more aloof and uninvolved in childcare, boys are unable to appropriate masculinity through close associations with their fathers. Instead, a male child comes to reject his mother and define masculinity in largely negative terms, identifying it as "that which is not feminine or involved with women. He does this by repressing whatever he takes to be feminine inside him, and, importantly, by denigrating and devaluing whatever he considers to be feminine in the outside world (Chodorow, 1989:51)." These effects are reinforced by the structure found in the larger society. Teaching, day care provision, and other "mothering" roles are most often filled by women. Men rarely are in occupations that provide contact with young children.

Thus, girls acquire femininity through association, but boys adopt a masculine identity by rejecting femininity. In consequence, men are more likely to resist and

disparage egalitarian gender roles than women. The feminine aspects of egalitarianism are cognitively incompatible with men's conceptions of masculinity, while the incorporation of masculine traits is much less problematic for women.

Men are often unwilling to abandon their traditional role in favor of a new egalitarian role due to society's dichotomization of gender roles, and the differential values associated with these categories (Riley, 2003; Ridgeway, 1997; Bernard, 1981). Ridgeway (1997) discusses the salience of gender status beliefs—cultural beliefs that deem one sex to be typically superior and considerably more competent than the other. In American society, gender status beliefs create substantial advantages for men over equivalent women. Men often desire to perpetuate these beliefs, so as to also preserve their favorable treatment. Individuals must acknowledge inconsistent or disconfirming information in order to develop an individuated perception of the other that surpasses initial, prescribed categorization. The degree to which one incorporates such information is dependent upon that person's motivations. Consequentially, men are less likely to observe, and more likely to discredit if they do observe, information about other or self that may cause gender status beliefs to be questioned and thereby negatively impact their greater rewards.

When limited to a dichotomy of gender, anything that is not masculine must therefore be identified as feminine. As such, individual men are unable to establish a new, legitimate form of masculine identity, and must accept the traditional role of provision (Riley, 2003). Bernard (1981) contends that the positing of masculinity and femininity as polar opposites causes femininity to be seen as the antithesis of masculinity, and compels men to view women's work as demasculinizing. Men also perceive

"women's work" to be a chore that lowers their worth, as the feminine role is less valued than the male role. For these reasons, men are antipathetic not only to women's work, but also to the sphere of women—the private sphere. And, aside from the nature or value of the work, egalitarianism confers additional responsibilities and demands upon men, thereby causing men to perceive it as an unfavorable alternative.

Also problematic is the fact that no legitimate successor to the good provider role has materialized; no new masculine identity has become available to men (Bernard, 1981; Riley, 2003). Riley (2003) asserts that the egalitarian gender role is understood to be a gender-neutral, rather than a masculine, role. Because of this, men who engage in the egalitarian role are not viewed as men, and often revert to the good provider role in order to assert their masculinity. Furthermore, the construction of egalitarianism as gender-neutral and provision as masculine posits them as noncompetitive alternatives, and allows the simultaneous acceptance of both without the critical questioning of the provider role.

Men's lack of support for egalitarian gender roles can further be explained by the culturally framing of manhood as something that must be achieved or accomplished, most often through a successful career or family provision. In contrast, womanhood is perceived as something that is "natural." Nurturing is thought to be intrinsic to each woman's being. Due to this cultural framework, men feel the necessity to prove their masculinity. Such proof entails the avoidance of departures from the masculine norm and the constraint of feminine attributes. Subscription to or support for egalitarian gender roles may be construed as evidence against a man's masculinity, and is therefore suppressed (Brines, 1994).

Thus, past research suggests that women and men maintain dissimilar viewpoints. In this study, significant differences in the gender role ideology of male and female respondents are anticipated. More specifically, women are predicted to respond to measures of gender role attitudes in a way that is more congruent with egalitarian gender ideology, while men are anticipated to reply in a way that corresponds to traditional views of gender.

Data and Methods

Analyses were conducted using data from the 2002 Monitoring the Future (MTF) 12th-Grade Survey. MTF employs a multistage probability sampling method, resulting in a sample representative of high school seniors in the contiguous United States. Throughout the analysis, the focus was upon 1) whether there are significant differences between the responses of men and women on both the independent and dependent variables, and 2) possible explanations of observed sex differences.

MTF is administered in six forms, each to a probability sample of high school seniors. Each of the forms contains a core questionnaire from which the independent variables of the study were extracted. The dependent variables, however, were asked only of those who responded to form three. Thus, the sample was limited to form three respondents. In addition, analysis was confined to Black and White individuals. Those who failed to provide their biological sex (thirty-nine respondents), the key independent variable, were dropped from the investigation. Twenty-one respondents were omitted for failing to respond to one or more dependent variable(s), and an additional 16 were

excluded for missing values on eleven or more independent variables. These actions resulted in a final sample size of 1,574 high school seniors—745 men and 829 women.

The dependent variables were measured using the responses to the following statements concerning gender role attitudes: 1) It is usually better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman takes care of the home and family; 2) A preschool child is likely to suffer if the mother works; and 3) A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work. The available responses for each statement are: disagree (-2), mostly disagree (-1), neither (0), mostly agree (1), and agree (2).

For both the first and second dependent variable, a response of disagree (-2) or mostly disagree (-1) indicates a more egalitarian gender role perspective, while a response of mostly agree (1) or agree (2) corresponds to a more traditional worldview. A reply of disagree (-2) or mostly disagree (-1) to the third dependent variable is evidence of a more traditional gender ideology, while an answer of mostly agree (1) or agree (2) denotes a more egalitarian gender role outlook. To simplify interpretation, the responses to the third dependent variables were inverted. Consequentially, for each of the dependent variables: a response of -2 reveals an egalitarian viewpoint, -1 indicates a somewhat egalitarian perspective, 0 intimates a neutral viewpoint, 1 indicates a somewhat traditional outlook, and a response of 2 reveals a traditional gender perspective.

The primary independent variable was sex. Several sociodemographic and individual factors were controlled for. Such scrutiny reveals determinants other than biological sex that may create differences in the gender role attitudes of young men and

women. These variables consist of: household attributes—household composition, number of siblings, whether the student's mother is/was employed, and parental education; individual characteristics—race, marital status, and self-perceived school ability; individual pursuits—earnings, average work hours, and educational plans; and measures of values—place of residence, political orientation, and importance of religion.

Utilizing information on whether the respondent resided with her mother and/or father, a household composition variable was constructed; this variable indicates whether the individual lived in a two-parent, single-mother, single-father, or other household. Mother's and father's education were measured in terms of the highest level of education attained—less than high school, high school graduation, some college, or bachelor's degree or more. Due to suspected multicollinearity between mother's education and father's education, new dummy variables were constructed. These variables indicate whether the respondent's mother has a higher level of education than the father, the father is the more educated parent, or the parents have the same level of education. For those cases in which the parents have a homogenous educational background, those with a bachelor's degree or more are separated from all others.

Respondents' marital status was marked as either single or other. Divorced/separated, married, and engaged individuals were consolidated in the other category in order to create a group large enough for analysis. Self-perceived school ability and intelligence were found to be highly correlated ($r = 0.738$); school ability was selected over intelligence due to the fact that its distribution was less skewed. For school ability, respondents classified themselves as below average, average, or above average on a seven-point scale. This was converted to a five-category scale—below average,

average, slightly above average, and far above average. The finer above average categories were maintained because the distribution was somewhat skewed in this direction. Dummy variables were created based upon whether individuals indicated that they were likely to attend only a two-year college, only a four-year college, both, or neither.

Remaining missing values were treated in the following manner: Missing values on number of siblings, parental education, school ability, weekly hours worked, weekly earnings, and maternal employment were reassigned to the mean response category. For each of these variables the mean response category was determined separately for women and men, so as to preserve any sex differences. Missing values concerning political orientation and importance of religion were reassigned to the category none of the above/don't know (0). Because their responses to the dependent variables were more similar to those with a marital status of other than to those of single respondents, individuals whose marital status was not provided were reassigned to the other category. Lastly, respondents whose rural/urban residence was not indicated were grouped with individuals from a rural background, since their responses to the dependent variables were most similar.

Independent variable means (see Table 1) indicate that a majority of respondents resided in a two-parent household, had at least one sibling living at home, had mothers who had worked all the time while they were growing, were white, were single, planned on attending only a four-year college, resided in the suburbs, and were apolitical. The average student had two siblings, considered herself to be slightly above average in school ability, earned less than seventy dollars a week, and worked eleven to fifteen

hours each week. A majority of men deemed religion to be pretty important to them, while women were more likely to consider religion to be very important. Parents were approximately equally distributed among the education categories.

Men were significantly more likely to reside in a two-parent household, while women were more likely to live with a single mother. Female respondents had significantly more siblings than male respondents. Women were more prone to be engaged, married, separated, or divorced than their male counterparts. Similar to findings of previous research, the present study determined that women earned significantly less than comparable men, despite the fact that they did not differ in the time they spent working.

Women were found to be more likely than their male counterparts to expect to attend a four-year college, while men were apt to express no plans for further education. Also compelling is the discovery that male respondents tended to be more conservative than their female counterparts, while women were significantly more likely to express no political orientation. Women were likely to consider religion to be very important, and male students were significantly more likely to deem religion as unimportant.

Results

When inspecting the dependent variables (see Table 2), women, on average, were found to mostly disagree with the statement that men should provide for their families and women should remain at home, while the average man neither agreed nor disagreed with the statement. This suggests that men are more likely than women to support the traditional gendered division of labor. Men neither disagreed nor agreed with the

statement asserting that preschool-aged children suffer when their mothers are employed, while women mostly disagreed with this suggestion. In addition, women mostly agreed with the assertion that working mothers can establish warm relationships with their children, while men neither agreed nor disagreed with this declaration. This denotes that women approve of maternal employment more than do men.

Among these three measures, women and men differed most in their support for a traditional household division of labor. Women were found to respond to each dependent variable in a way congruent with more egalitarian gender role attitudes, while men responded in a way consistent with a less egalitarian gender role perspective. These differences were highly significant, and provide overwhelming support for the study's hypothesis. Women hold more egalitarian gender role attitudes than men. However, men were not determined to hold highly traditional gender beliefs. Instead, their responses disclose a neutral viewpoint—neither traditional nor egalitarian.

Sex-differentiated regression models were run for each of the dependent variables (see Tables 3-5). The full model, which incorporates controls for all of the independent variables—household attributes, individual characteristics, individual pursuits, and measures of values, is a good fit for each of the dependent variables. The model accounts for 8.8% of the variation in the women's responses and 7.4% of the variation in the men's responses on the first dependent variable, which measures agreement with a traditional gendered division of labor. When applied to responses concerning the perceived effects of maternal employment on child well-being, the model explains 11.8% of the variation in the women's attitudes and 11.4% of the variation in the men's attitudes. When inspecting attitudes concerning the quality of a working mother's relationship with her

child, the full model accounts for 7.7% of the variation in the women's responses and 9.8% of the variation in the men's responses.[1]

A significant intercept indicates that the dependent variable response is significantly different from a neutral (0) response. For the most part, any significance in the intercepts is mediated and reduced as controls for individual pursuits and values are incorporated in the models. An exception is the intercept for men on the traditional division of labor measure. Even after the full model is applied, men remain significantly more traditional in their view of the gendered division of labor.

Men who resided in a household without either their father or mother were less likely to believe that working mothers could have good relationships with their children. Female respondents with more siblings were determined to have a less egalitarian perception of the gendered division of labor. Those women who resided with their siblings were more egalitarian on the same measure.

For each of the dependent variables, maternal employment had a negative effect, causing children to develop more egalitarian gender role attitudes. The effect was larger for sons than daughters, and was greatest when the mother had been employed all the time. However, maternal employment for most of the time or some of the time had a significant negative effect in some cases, particularly for sons. This is especially true when inspecting attitudes concerning the quality of a working mother's relationship with her child. Thus, those respondents who observed non-traditional gender patterns (a working mother) while growing up were more accepting of egalitarian gender roles.

Female respondents with more educated fathers and less educated mothers were found to have less traditional gender perspectives. It may be that highly educated men

encourage their daughters to pursue personal success. Also, it is possible that these women observe gender inequality in their parents' relationships, and seek to redress such inequality.

Though Black and White individuals did not differ in their perception of a traditional division of labor, their views concerning maternal employment varied. Black respondents were more supportive of maternal employment than their White counterparts. This effect was both stronger and more significant for Black men than women. Historically, the lower socioeconomic status of African Americans has resulted in a high number of Black women in the workforce. Also, since Black men's earnings are, on average, lower than those of white men, the earnings of Black women are viewed as more central to family income. These factors likely contribute to higher levels of support for maternal employment among African Americans. Additionally, it was found that men with higher levels of school ability were less supportive of a traditional division of labor.

For each of the dependent variables, a conservative political orientation had a positive effect, producing more traditional gender role attitudes. This effect was more pronounced for men. This is unsurprising, as the conservative political platform stresses "family values," and struggles to conserve the status quo within the family. Likewise, a liberal orientation demonstrated a negative effect on women's attitudes concerning the traditional division of labor.

Both men and women who consider religion to be unimportant, as well as women who deem religion to be of little importance or pretty important, are less supportive of a traditional division of labor. In addition, women who consider religion to be unimportant

or of little importance are less likely to perceive maternal employment as harmful to children. Once again, this is likely due to the fact that many religious organizations support the familial status quo.

Conclusions

The extensive support of the hypothesis attests to the precision and quality if the data, as well as to the strength of the selected analysis methods. After careful inspection, the following conclusions can be made: 1) Men were significantly more likely to live in a two-parent household than women; 2) female respondents were more likely to reside with a single mother; 3) women had a significantly greater number of siblings than men; 4) women were more likely to be married or engaged than men; 5) men earned significantly more than women; 6) women more than men thought it likely that they would attend a four-year college; 7) men's political orientation was more conservative than that of women; and 8) men were significantly less apt than women to deem religion as important.

Men expressed significantly greater support for the traditional household division of labor than women. Additionally, men asserted a lower level of approval of maternal employment. Thus, considerable support for the hypothesis was found; young women were more egalitarian in their gender role attitudes than men.

Further conclusions concerning the ways in which the independent variables mediate gender role attitudes can be drawn. Maternal employment, a liberal political orientation, and a perception of religion as unimportant produced a more egalitarian gender role perspective. African Americans, as well as those respondents who came

from a household in which the father has a higher level of education than the mother, expressed less traditional attitudes.

In the near future, I intend to expand upon this analysis of men's and women's gender role attitudes. Specifically, pooled regression models utilizing interaction effects between sex and the other independent variables will be analyzed. This method will more clearly reveal the ways in which the independent variables operate differently for women and men.

Future research could also be performed to better investigate the degree to which earnings, college attendance, religiosity, political orientation, and family structure differ by biological sex. Additionally, future studies can further document the ways in which maternal employment, race, political orientation, and religiosity affect gender role attitudes. The mechanisms through which these effects arise also merit investigation. Also, analyses could be conducted in the future to determine whether other background variables shape gender role attitudes, and whether such factors operate in the same way for women and men. Lastly, a time series analysis could be conducted to determine how the gender perspectives of male and female high school seniors have changed over time.

The results of this study contain implications concerning the ways in which gender affects social reality, and the ways in which the perspectives of women and men differ. In particular, young men and women may experience difficulties in reconciling their divergent gender role attitudes as they meet one another in the public sector, forge romantic and/or marital relationships, and create families. The finding that men hold predominantly neutral gender role beliefs—neither traditional nor egalitarian—suggests that they may be open to more egalitarian patterns within their families and workplaces.

If so, we may soon observe greater levels of gender equality. Men may soon become more involved fathers and better husbands, and women may soon have greater opportunities to fulfill their needs in addition to those of their family members.

Notes

[1] The fit of the models did not improve when substituting religious attendance for importance of religion.

Table 1: Means and Standard Deviations of Independent Variables						
		Women		Men		Sig.
Variable Name	**Variable Definition**	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	**Diff.**
Household Attributes						
Household Composition (*Two-parent*)		0.689	0.463	0.734	0.442	*
Single Mother Household		0.218	0.413	0.170	0.376	**
Single Father Household		0.042	0.201	0.056	0.231	
Other Household		0.051	0.219	0.039	0.194	
Number of Siblings	0=none; 1=1; 2=2; 3=3 or more	1.959	0.943	1.807	0.914	***
Sibling Residing in Household	0=no; 1=yes	0.668	0.471	0.660	0.474	
Maternal Employment History (*Not Employed*)		0.150	0.357	0.144	0.351	
Mother Employed Sometimes		0.204	0.403	0.212	0.409	
Mother Employed Most of the Time		0.182	0.386	0.185	0.389	
Mother Employed All of the Time		0.464	0.499	0.459	0.499	
Parental Education (*Both Less than B.A.*)		0.258	0.438	0.219	0.414	
Both Parents have B.A. or More		0.245	0.430	0.262	0.440	
Mother has More Education than Father		0.293	0.455	0.287	0.453	
Father has More Education than Mother		0.204	0.403	0.232	0.423	
Individual Characteristics						
Race (*White*)		0.846	0.362	0.874	0.332	
Black		0.154	0.362	0.126	0.332	
Marital Status (*Single*)		0.903	0.295	0.949	0.220	***
Engaged/Married/Separated/Divorced		0.097	0.295	0.051	0.220	***
School Ability (Self-Reported)	1=below avg; 2=avg; 3=slightly above avg; 4=above avg; 5=high above	2.981	1.006	3.063	1.119	
Individual Pursuits						
Earnings	0 = $0; 1 = $1-75; 2 = $76-125; 3 = $126+	1.344	1.056	1.483	1.097	**
Hours Spent Working	0=0 hrs; 1=≤5; 2=6-10; 3=11-15; 4=16-20; 5=21-25; 6=26-30; 7=>30	2.935	2.172	3.051	2.294	
Educational Plans (*No College Plans*)		0.059	0.236	0.145	0.352	***
Two-year College Only		0.109	0.311	0.106	0.308	
Four-year College Only		0.556	0.497	0.503	0.500	*
Both Two-year and Four-year College		0.276	0.447	0.246	0.431	
Measures of Values						
Place of Residence (*Suburb*)		0.516	0.500	0.541	0.499	
City		0.286	0.452	0.256	0.437	
Country		0.198	0.399	0.203	0.402	
Political Orientation (*Apolitical*)		0.416	0.493	0.319	0.467	***
Conservative		0.122	0.327	0.179	0.383	***
Moderate		0.242	0.429	0.270	0.444	
Liberal		0.220	0.414	0.232	0.423	
Importance of Religion (*Very Important*)		0.312	0.464	0.216	0.412	***
Don't Know		0.129	0.335	0.142	0.350	
Not Important		0.082	0.275	0.158	0.365	***
Little Important		0.218	0.413	0.220	0.415	
Pretty Important		0.258	0.438	0.263	0.441	
N		829		745		
*** p ≤ .001, ** p ≤ .01, * p ≤ .05						
Note: Italics are used to indicate reference group.						

Table 2: Means and Standard Deviations of Dependent Variables					
	Women		Men		Significant
Dependent Variable	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	**Difference**
Traditional Division of Labor	-0.935	1.233	0.094	1.350	***
Child Suffers if Mother Works	-0.743	1.214	-0.123	1.338	***
Working Mother has Good Relationship with Child	-1.107	1.158	-0.459	1.364	***
N	829		745		
*** p ≤ .001, ** p ≤ .01, * p ≤ .05					

Table 3: Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients Predicting Agreement with Traditional Division of Labor

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men	
Household Attributes																
Household Composition (*Two-parent*)																
Single Mother Household	-0.049		-0.101		-0.054		-0.101		-0.065		-0.103		-0.005		-0.048	
Single Father Household	-0.053		-0.293		-0.054		-0.320		-0.079		-0.317		-0.048		-0.201	
Other Household	-0.190		-0.081		-0.231		-0.059		-0.281		-0.056		-0.215		0.050	
Number of Siblings	0.107	*	-0.007		0.103	*	-0.013		0.105	*	-0.018		0.098	*	-0.038	
Sibling Residing in Household	-0.200	*	-0.138		-0.188	+	-0.131		-0.195	*	-0.116		-0.205	*	-0.089	
Maternal Employment History (*Not Employed*)																
Mother Employed Sometimes	-0.194		-0.310	+	-0.206		-0.333	*	-0.196		-0.339	*	-0.171		-0.301	+
Mother Employed Most of the Time	-0.170		-0.323	+	-0.182		-0.352	*	-0.184		-0.372	*	-0.157		-0.347	*
Mother Employed All of the Time	-0.43	***	-0.472	**	-0.435	***	-0.505	***	-0.447	***	-0.509	***	-0.431	***	-0.460	**
Parental Education (*Both Less than B.A.*)																
Both Parents have B.A. or More	-0.051		-0.358	*	-0.034		-0.284	+	-0.002		-0.258	+	0.005		-0.202	
Mother has More Education than Father	-0.047		-0.199		-0.043		-0.166		-0.057		-0.167		-0.018		-0.169	
Father has More Education than Mother	-0.246	+	-0.192		-0.245	+	-0.148		-0.250	*	-0.154		-0.254	*	-0.094	
Individual Characteristics																
Black (*White*)					-0.022		-0.129		-0.048		-0.120		-0.110		-0.072	
Engaged/Married/Separated/Divorced (*Single*)					0.208		0.148		0.182		0.149		0.133		0.153	
School Ability (Self-Reported)					-0.020		-0.126	**	0.007		-0.120	*	-0.011		-0.123	**
Individual Pursuits																
Earnings									0.039		0.106		0.033		0.115	
Hours Spent Working									-0.047		-0.043		-0.040		-0.050	
Educational Plans (*No College Plans*)																
Two-year College Only									-0.134		0.038		-0.086		-0.005	
Four-year College Only									-0.340	+	-0.013		-0.244		-0.067	
Both Two-year and Four-year College									0.008		0.143		0.051		0.078	
Measures of Values																
Place of Residence (*Suburb*)																
City													-0.144		-0.150	
Country													-0.025		0.211	
Political Orientation (*Apolitical*)																
Conservative													0.224		0.399	**
Moderate													-0.022		-0.050	
Liberal													-0.273	*	-0.054	
Importance of Religion (*Very Important*)																
Don't Know													-0.135		-0.240	
Not Important													-0.408	*	-0.425	*
Little Important													-0.437	***	-0.241	
Pretty Important													-0.253	*	-0.122	
R-Squared	0.015		0.022		0.031		0.033		0.049		0.039		0.088		0.074	
Intercept	-0.641	***	0.773	***	-0.594	**	1.160	***	-0.373		1.083	***	-0.121		1.216	***
N	829		745		829		745		829		745		829		745	

*** p ≤ .001, ** p ≤ .01, * p ≤ .05, + p ≤ .1

Note: Italics are used to indicate reference group.

Dependent Variable: It is usually better for everyone involved if the man is the achiever outside the home and the woman cares for the home and family.

Table 4: Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients Predicting View of Maternal Employment's Effect on Young Children

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men	
Household Attributes																
Household Composition (*Two-parent*)																
Single Mother Household	0.022		-0.081		0.084		0.031		0.075		0.031		0.125		0.039	
Single Father Household	-0.081		0.051		-0.094		0.066		-0.119		0.041		-0.093		0.086	
Other Household	-0.250		-0.142		-0.206		0.052		-0.240		0.059		-0.181		0.134	
Number of Siblings	0.044		-0.057		0.068		-0.022		0.066		-0.030		0.062		-0.035	
Sibling Residing in Household	-0.043		0.114		-0.050		0.143		-0.061		0.160		-0.062		0.164	
Maternal Employment History (*Not Employed*)																
Mother Employed Sometimes	-0.275	*	-0.324	*	-0.263	+	-0.317	+	-0.260	+	-0.313	+	-0.226		-0.307	+
Mother Employed Most of the Time	-0.321	*	-0.640	***	-0.291	*	-0.637	***	-0.289	*	-0.635	***	-0.261	+	-0.592	***
Mother Employed All of the Time	-0.81	***	-0.868	***	-0.779	***	-0.829	***	-0.788	***	-0.814	***	-0.743	***	-0.751	***
Parental Education (*Both Less than B.A.*)																
Both Parents have B.A. or More	0.076		-0.063		0.034		-0.082		0.062		-0.085		0.050		-0.058	
Mother has More Education than Father	-0.056		0.007		-0.057		0.032		-0.065		0.019		-0.031		0.019	
Father has More Education than Mother	-0.318	**	-0.147		-0.323	**	-0.159		-0.323	**	-0.177		-0.308	*	-0.145	
Individual Characteristics																
Black (*White*)					-0.290	*	-0.693	***	-0.301	*	-0.698	***	-0.366	**	-0.575	***
Engaged/Married/Separated/Divorced (*Single*)					-0.108		0.247		-0.135		0.254		-0.175		0.248	
School Ability (Self-Reported)					0.022		-0.021		0.036		-0.012		0.024		-0.017	
Individual Pursuits																
Earnings									0.056		0.082		0.058		0.059	
Hours Spent Working									-0.029		-0.055	+	-0.021		-0.046	
Educational Plans (*No College Plans*)																
Two-year College Only									-0.199		-0.076		-0.161		-0.085	
Four-year College Only									-0.297		-0.117		-0.246		-0.127	
Both Two-year and Four-year College									-0.112		-0.056		-0.113		-0.075	
Measures of Values																
Place of Residence (*Suburb*)																
City													0.015		-0.164	
Country													0.103		0.064	
Political Orientation (*Apolitical*)																
Conservative													0.365	**	0.435	**
Moderate													0.046		0.075	
Liberal													0.037		-0.004	
Importance of Religion (*Very Important*)																
Don't Know													0.101		0.132	
Not Important													-0.361	*	0.220	
Little Important													-0.274	*	0.059	
Pretty Important													-0.183	+	0.070	
R-Squared	0.076		0.064		0.083		0.092		0.090		0.096		0.118		0.114	
Intercept	-0.237		0.554	**	-0.313		0.564	*	-0.111		0.669	*	-0.133		0.481	
N	829		745		829		745		829		745		829		745	

*** p ≤ .001, ** p ≤ .01, * p ≤ .05, + p ≤ .1

Note: Italics are used to indicate reference group.

Dependent Variable: A preschool child is likely to suffer if the mother works.

Table 5: Unstandardized OLS Regression Coefficients Predicting View of Maternal Employment's Effect on Mother-Child Relationship

	Model 1				Model 2				Model 3				Model 4			
	Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men		Women		Men	
Household Attributes																
Household Composition (*Two-parent*)																
Single Mother Household	0.059		-0.151		0.083		-0.053		0.078		-0.047		0.097		-0.043	
Single Father Household	-0.068		-0.107		-0.100		-0.094		-0.117		-0.092		-0.089		-0.066	
Other Household	-0.202		0.337		-0.160		0.515	+	-0.170		0.517	+	-0.144		0.586	*
Number of Siblings	0.071		0.003		0.080	+	0.035		0.077	+	0.028		0.079	+	0.019	
Sibling Residing in Household	-0.079		-0.051		-0.090		-0.028		-0.095		-0.020		-0.107		-0.011	
Maternal Employment History (*Not Employed*)																
Mother Employed Sometimes	-0.199		-0.462	**	-0.187		-0.455	**	-0.187		-0.470	**	-0.159		-0.482	**
Mother Employed Most of the Time	-0.342	*	-0.581	***	-0.317	*	-0.575	***	-0.313	*	-0.592	***	-0.299	*	-0.561	***
Mother Employed All of the Time	-0.600	***	-0.931	***	-0.588	***	-0.893	***	-0.590	***	-0.907	***	-0.558	***	-0.863	***
Parental Education (*Both Less than B.A.*)																
Both Parents have B.A. or More	0.017		-0.213		0.021		-0.238		0.038		-0.207		0.034		-0.196	
Mother has More Education than Father	-0.213	*	0.007		-0.213	*	0.026		-0.216	*	0.033		-0.191	+	0.049	
Father has More Education than Mother	-0.299	*	-0.096		-0.287	*	-0.110		-0.285	*	-0.097		-0.286	*	-0.081	
Individual Characteristics																
Black (*White*)					-0.147		-0.601	***	-0.157		-0.601	***	-0.106		-0.533	***
Engaged/Married/Separated/Divorced (*Single*)					-0.189		0.127		-0.216		0.102		-0.247	+	0.114	
School Ability (Self-Reported)					-0.036		-0.006		-0.033		0.001		-0.043		-0.004	
Individual Pursuits																
Earnings									0.021		-0.003		0.016		-0.023	
Hours Spent Working									-0.007		0.005		-0.002		0.016	
Educational Plans (*No College Plans*)																
Two-year College Only									-0.269		-0.148		-0.243		-0.153	
Four-year College Only									-0.273		-0.113		-0.237		-0.142	
Both Two-year and Four-year College									-0.210		0.005		-0.214		-0.033	
Measures of Values																
Place of Residence (*Suburb*)																
City													-0.105		-0.139	
Country													-0.066		-0.112	
Political Orientation (*Apolitical*)																
Conservative													0.346	*	0.356	*
Moderate													0.014		0.060	
Liberal													-0.098		-0.033	
Importance of Religion (*Very Important*)																
Don't Know													0.244	+	0.122	
Not Important													0.111		0.019	
Little Important													-0.023		-0.090	
Pretty Important													0.061		0.006	
R-Squared	0.053		0.064		0.058		0.083		0.061		0.085		0.077		0.098	
Intercept	-0.693	***	0.296		-0.576	**	0.272		-0.340		0.316		-0.413		0.301	
N	829		745		829		745		829		745		829		745	

*** p ≤ .001, ** p ≤ .01, * p ≤ .05, + p ≤ .1

Note: Italics are used to indicate reference group.

Dependent Variable: A working mother can establish just as warm and secure a relationship with her children as a mother who does not work.

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